

CLAIMS:

1. A tissue contourer for contouring mucosal tissue in preparation for dental implantation or grafting, the contourer comprising:

a central portion having a first side configured to abut an edentulous portion of a maxilla or mandible and a second side configured to contour mucosal tissue overlying the edentulous portion;

a first end extending from the central portion and configured to abut a first tooth at one end of the edentulous gap;

a second end extending from the central portion and configured to abut another tooth at another end of the edentulous gap; and

a means for filling the central portion with fluid.

2. The tissue contourer of claim 1, wherein the first end, the second end and the central portion have an overall length of no more than 71.2 mm.

3. The tissue contourer of claim 2, wherein the first end, the second end and the central portion have an overall length of no more than 52 mm.

4. The tissue contourer of claim 3, wherein the first end, the second end and the central portion have an overall length of no more than 26 mm.

5. The tissue contourer of claim 2, wherein the contourer has an internal working volume of no more than 31.2 ml.

6. The tissue contourer of claim 5, wherein the contourer has an internal working volume of no more than 22.1 ml.

7. The tissue contourer of claim 6, wherein the contourer has an internal working volume of no more than 5 ml.

8. A tissue contourer bladder for contouring mucosal tissue in preparation for dental implantation or grafting, the bladder comprising:

an elongate central portion configured to be disposed between a maxilla or mandible and mucosal tissue overlying the maxilla or mandible;

a first end configured to be disposed in a first terminal gap; and

a second end configured to be disposed in a second terminal gap.

9. The tissue contourer bladder of claim 8, wherein the first and second terminal gaps are the same terminal gap.

10. The tissue contourer bladder of claim 8, wherein the first and second terminal gaps are in the same quadrant.

11. The tissue contourer bladder of claim 8, wherein the first and second terminal gaps are in adjacent quadrants.

12. A tissue contourer for contouring mucosal tissue in preparation for dental implantation or grafting, the contourer comprising a bladder having:

an elongated central portion with a texture, wherein the central portion is configured to be disposed between a maxilla or mandible and overlying mucosal tissue;

a first end configured to be disposed in a first terminal gap; and

a second end configured to be disposed in a second terminal gap.

13. The tissue contourer of claim 12, wherein the texture is defined by a plurality of protrusions extending outward away from a surface of the central portion.

14. The tissue contourer of claim 13, wherein the texture is further defined by a plurality of concavities extending inwardly from the surface of the central portion.

15. The tissue contourer of claim 12, wherein the texture is defined by a plurality of concavities extending inwardly from a surface of the central portion.

16. The tissue contourer of claim 12, wherein the texture is defined by a plurality of elongated concavities or protrusions.

17. The tissue contourer of claim 16, wherein the elongated concavities or protrusions are formed as elongated ovals.

18. The tissue contourer of claim 17, wherein each of the elongated ovals is disposed at an angle to its adjacent elongated oval.

19. A tissue contourer for contouring mucosal tissue in preparation for dental implantation or grafting, the contourer comprising:

an elongated central portion having a top side, a bottom side, a facial-facing side, and a lingual-facing side, wherein at least one of the four sides is stiffer than the other three sides;

a first end configured to be disposed in a first terminal gap at one end of an edentulous gap; and

a second end configured to be disposed in a second terminal gap at another end of the edentulous gap.

20. The tissue contourer of claim 19, wherein the bottom side is stiffer than the top side.

21. The tissue contourer of claim 20, wherein the facial-facing and lingual-facing sides are stiffer than the top side.

22. The tissue contourer of claim 19, wherein the elongated central portion is a polygon in at least one cross-section.
23. The tissue contourer of claim 20, wherein the elongated central portion is a quadrilateral in at least one cross-section.
24. The tissue contourer of claim 23, wherein the elongated central portion is a regular polygon in at least one cross-section.
25. The tissue contourer of claim 19 wherein the two ends are stiffer than the top side.
26. A tissue contourer for contouring mucosal tissue in preparation for dental implantation or grafting, the contourer comprising:
- a cylindrical elongated central portion with at least one longitudinal cross-section that is a conic section;
 - a first end configured to be disposed in a first terminal gap at one end of an edentulous gap; and
 - a second end configured to be disposed in a second terminal gap at another end of the edentulous gap.
27. The tissue contourer of claim 26 wherein the conic section is a circle.
28. The tissue contourer of claim 27, wherein the conic section does not change when the tissue contourer is filled with fluid.
29. The tissue contourer of claim 26, wherein the elongated central portion is made of a self-sealing material.
30. A tissue contourer for contouring mucosal tissue in an edentulous gap in preparation for dental implantation or grafting, the contourer comprising:

a central portion configured to contour mucosal tissue overlying the edentulous gap;

a first end configured to be disposed in a first terminal gap at one end of the edentulous gap; and

a second end configured to be disposed in a second terminal gap at another end of the edentulous gap; and

a means for filling the central portion with fluid.

31. The tissue contourer of claim 30, wherein the means for filling the central portion with fluid includes a membrane means for limiting fluid leakage from the contourer.

32. The tissue contourer of claim 31, wherein the means for filling the central portion with fluid includes an annulus defining an opening through which fluid is introduced into the central portion.

33. The tissue contourer of claim 32, wherein the means for filling the central portion includes a means coupled to and between the annulus and the central portion to direct fluid from the annulus to the central portion.

34. A tissue contourer for contouring mucosal tissue in an edentulous gap in preparation for dental implantation or grafting, the contourer comprising:

a central portion configured to contour mucosal tissue overlying the edentulous gap;

a first end coupled to the central portion and configured to be disposed in a first terminal gap at one end of the edentulous gap; and

a second end coupled to the central portion configured to be disposed in a second terminal gap at another end of the edentulous gap.

35. The tissue contourer of claim 34, wherein the central portion has a top surface and wherein the central portion further comprises a plurality of projections disposed on the top surface and extending upwardly therefrom.

36. The tissue contourer of claim 35, wherein the plurality of projections is spaced between 2 and 10 mm apart.

37. The tissue contourer of claim 36, wherein the plurality of projections are disposed to contour papillae in the mucosal tissue.

38. The tissue contourer of claim 36, wherein the plurality of projections extend between 1 and 5 mm upward from the top surface.

39. A tissue contourer for contouring mucosal tissue in an edentulous gap in preparation for dental implantation or grafting, the contourer comprising:

a bladder having a central portion configured to contour mucosal tissue overlying the edentulous gap, a first end configured to be disposed in a first terminal gap at one end of the edentulous gap, and a second end configured to be disposed in a second terminal gap at another end of the edentulous gap,

wherein the bladder defines at least one passageway extending therethrough.

40. The tissue contourer of claim 40 wherein the passageway extends from a top surface through a bottom surface of the bladder.

41. The tissue contourer of claim 1, wherein the means for filling is selected from the group consisting of a self-sealing portion of central portion and a port.